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## Information Technologies and Social Orders

By David Maines

Aldine. Paperback. Condition: New. 272 pages. Dimensions: 9.0in. x 6.1in. x 0.8in. The history of human society, as Carl Couch recounts it in his speculative final book, is a history of successive, sometimes overlapping information technologies used to process the varied symbolic representations that inform particular social contexts. Couch departs from earlier media theorists who ignored these contexts in order to concentrate on the technologies themselves. Here, instead, he adopts a consistent theory of interpersonal and intergroup relations to depict the essential interface between the technologies and the social contexts. He emphasizes the dynamic and formative capacities of such technologies, and places them within the major institutional relations of societies of any size. Social orders are viewed in these pages as inherently and reflexively shaped by the information technologies that participants in the institutions use to carry out their work. The manuscript was nearly complete in draft at the time of Couch's death. He has left a bold, synthetic statement, reclaiming the common ground of sociology and communication studies and articulating the indispensability of each for the other. With admirable scope, across historical epochs and cultures, he shows in detail the transformative power of information technologies. While the author hopes that...



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